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United States Department of Agriculture,

BUREAU OF PLANT INDUSTRY,

Agricultural Technology,

WASHINGTON, D. C.

MEMORANDUM OF INFORMATION CONCERNING OFFICIAL COTTON GRADES.

THE GRADE NAMES.

The names of the official grades of white American cotton as given in the act of Congress providing for the establishment of the official grades are as follows:

Middling fair.
Strict good middling.
Good middling.
Strict middling.
Middling.

Strict low middling.
Low middling.
Strict good ordinary.
Good ordinary.

METHOD OF PREPARATION OF THE OFFICIAL GRADES.

Each of the official grades is prepared in a box 20 inches square and 5 inches deep, and each of the nine grade boxes contains 12 samples of cotton, representing as nearly as possible the range of diversity within the grade. Inside the lid of each box is attached a full-sized photograph showing the appearance of the cotton when certified by the Secretary of Agriculture. The seal of the Department of Agriculture and the signature of the Secretary, together with a seal impress certifying the grade of the cotton, appear on the photograph, which thus becomes an official document. As each particle of trash and every material unevenness in the surface of the cotton are shown in the photograph, it is evident that any material change in the appearance of the cotton can easily be detected. Of course, no photograph can show the grade of the cotton—only the position of the trash and fiber.

The types as now prepared for the trade present curved surfaces in the boxes. Formerly cotton types had been placed loose in the grade boxes and it was deemed necessary that the boxes be full. The pressure of the lid on the tops of the types gradually flattened them and produced a packed surface, which it was impossible to satisfactorily imitate with a piece of fresh cotton. The appearance of cotton thus packed also varies with variations in the amount of pressure. The official grades are so prepared that they are not pressed by the lid. The types, therefore, remain in the same condition as when they were certified and closely resemble freshly opened cotton. It is believed that in this respect the official grades have an advantage over any previously issued.

ACT GOVERNING THE SALE OF THE OFFICIAL GRADES.

The act of Congress providing for the establishment of the official cotton grades specifically states that they shall be prepared by the Secretary in practical form and furnished to anyone desiring the same upon the payment of the cost of their preparation. It is evident, therefore, that the exact price of the official grades will be determined by the extent of the demand and the cost of the material used in their preparation. During the first year of their distribution the price was \$35 per set, but owing to the increased demand and improved facilities it was possible to reduce the price in the second year to \$30 per set.

When purchased at contract rates and in quantity, the actual material used has cost about \$20 per set. To this must be added the labor cost of preparation, the expert service of buying, grading, and inspection, and the clerical work incident to the project.

Special attention is invited to the fact that the Secretary of Agriculture is without authority to dispose of these grades otherwise than by sale.

PERPETUATION OF THE STANDARD.

Experts of the highest class have been employed in the preparation of the official cotton grades, and each set is a correct copy of the original types promulgated by the Secretary of Agriculture. These original types are preserved with the greatest care. To provide for the maintenance of exactly the same standard through an indefinite future, 50 sets, exact duplicates of the original, have been preserved in vacuum tubes, secure from all deterioration due to the action of light, moisture, organisms, or atmospheric changes. These will be opened as needed to furnish fresh working duplicates in years to come.

THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Secretary of Agriculture was assisted in the preparation of the original types by the following committee, which represented every branch of the cotton industry:

Mr. Nathaniel M. Thayer, chairman (Barry, Thayer & Co.), Boston, Mass.	
Mr. Joseph A. Airey (John M. Parker & Co.), New Orleans, La.	Mr. F. M. Crump (F. M. Crump & Co.), Memphis, Tenn.
Mr. C. P. Baker (Lawrence Manufacturing Co.), Boston, Mass.	Mr. George W. Neville (Weld & Neville), New York, N. Y.
Mr. John Martin, Paris, Tex.	Mr. Charles A. Vedder (J. D. Rogers & Co.), Galveston, Tex.
Mr. Lewis M. Parker, Greenville, S. C.	
Mr. James Akers (Inman, Akers & Inman), Atlanta, Ga.	

This committee, which was unanimous in its recommendation of these grades, was assisted by the following expert cotton classifiers:

Mr. W. P. Barbot, New York Cotton Exchange.
 Mr. Jules Mazerat, New Orleans Cotton Exchange.
 Mr. J. R. Taylor (A. L. Wolff & Co.), Dallas, Tex.

PROTECTION OF THE TYPES.

Experience shows that very few people understand the necessity of protecting the cotton-grades from light and dust. Unless great care is taken the grades will soon alter so as to be no longer true copies of the originals, and it is therefore suggested that the official grades should never be opened except for the purpose of viewing them and that as soon as this object has been accomplished they be immediately closed. Every care is exercised by the Department of Agriculture to keep the trash in the original position in the different types, a special style of package having been adopted at the suggestion of the express companies for the purpose of necessitating their transportation right side up. When, for any reason, it is necessary that the official grades be transported from one place to another it is suggested that their integrity will be best preserved by keeping them strictly right side up.

N. A. COBB,
Agricultural Technologist.

Approved:

B. T. GALLOWAY,
Chief of Bureau.

JANUARY 5, 1912.



